

Respect your Elders

by John Cantey Knight

Behind her, the bed was unmade, sheets and quilts mixed. Like two mules released from harness, he watched them swing wide to wander. She finished pulling the shimmy over her head. Spitting snuff into a broken cup, he unclasped his overalls to fall about his work boots. He took out his gold-plated timepiece to hold it tightly. "You at the races, Gramps." He looked at her as if she was livestock. She rolled down the stockings; "I want my money." "You'll get h'it when I'm done." He motioned her around like an auctioneer. The bed sagged, ample ass braced, waiting. Cool air percolated through the floor cracks. Her skin was getting goose bumps. "Hurry up. I've got other friends." "Any of them got two bits to a dollar?" He opened the pocket watch and looked at his dead wife's likeness. He said, "Forgive me." "You ain't done nothing yet, hurry up." Like a heifer, she buckled under a bull's weight. "Respect your elders," he said, but liked her sassiness. "I adore older men. My grandpa first broke me in." She washed him, took his money and said, "Good-bye." It'd be another year before he saved money enough or had the time to piss away with a Beale Street whore.